



State of Connecticut
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
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LEGISLATIVE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
PUBLIC SAFETY AND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Testimony for March 16, 2012
Planning & Development Committee
House Bill 5455

AAC Penalties For And The Investigation Of The Operation Of Illegal Massage Establishments

To The Distinguished Co-Chairs and Members,

Thank you for allowing me to testify on the merits of HB-5455.

The Massage Therapists Association approached me with their concerns this year. We met with Commissioner Mullen and Attorney General Jepson on this matter to seek their input as well. The Association has noticed a weakness in the licensure system, whereby aspiring practitioners may be licensed through the Department of Public Health without having a demonstrated ability to take the examination offered by the National Certification Board for Therapeutic Massage and Bodywork. This leads the Association to the conclusion there are one or more "diploma mills" in operation outside of Connecticut's borders. The Board's list of questionable schools has produced "graduates" opening businesses in Connecticut. Some of these people have either been arrested for prostitution or have been observed engaging in business routines that lead Association officials to draw the same conclusion about the nature of their practice. The implications for either prostitution or human trafficking were compelling reasons for this to be brought before me.

The Department of Public Health is tasked with licensing a broad diversity of professions, and the resources are not always in place to facilitate easy cross-referencing of qualifications. The changes in this bill should clarify the oversight process, helping to prevent the degradation of this trade.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Linda", written in dark ink.

Rep. Linda Orange
Deputy Speaker of the House